DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 257 876 TM 850 343

AUTHOR Fremer, John J.
TITLE Appropriate Quality Assurance Roles for Professional Associations.
PUB DATE Mar 85
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (69th, Chicago, IL, March 31-April 4, 1985).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Professional Associations; Professional Continuing Education; *Quality Control; Standards; Test Construction; Testing Problems; Tests; Test Theory; Test Use
IDENTIFIERS American Educational Research Association; American Psychological Association; National Council on Measurement in Education

ABSTRACT

The author proposes a greater professional association role in establishing standards for quality assurance in testing. He presents his views as a test developer who dislikes the legal model for resolving professional issues. The use of publications and informational activities to make people aware of the professional standards and how they can be applied is suggested. Professional associations should become actively involved in training and promoting continuing education to familiarize professionals with the new standards and their application. Compliance with standards must be monitored through self-policing, tribunals, consultation-arbitration, complaint inventory/reporting, or facilitators. The National Council on Measurement in Education, American Educational Research Association, and the American Psychological Association could expand their roles in quality assurance in test development and use with these suggested methods. (DWH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED257876

APPROPRIATE QUALITY ASSURANCE ROLES FOR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS[1]

John J. Fremer
The Psychological Corporation
Cleveland, Ohio

A. Perspective of Presentation

- Active test and test program developer
- Student of criticism of tests and test use
- Prefer to look for mutually agreeable solutions
- Dislike intensely legal model for resolving professional issues
- Proponent of greater professional association role in quality assurance in testing

[Editorial note: The material placed in boxes in this typed version was included in a handout used at the NCME meeting.]

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. J. Fremer
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

---

1 Notes from presentation at the annual meeting of the National Council on Measurement in Education, Chicago, Illinois, April 1985

Part of invited symposium - Quality Assurance in Test Development and Use. The other papers presented were as follows:

- Role of the Joint Technical Standards in promoting high quality test development and use. - Professor Robert L. Linn, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Development and operation of a voluntary audit program. - Jerome R. Murphy, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey.

TM 850 343

- Active test and test program developer - I began work as a test developer almost 25 years ago when I served as an item writer for the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests while I was a graduate student at Columbia University, Teachers College. After graduate school I worked for 18 years in test and test program development at Educational Testing Service. Since 1983 I have had the good fortune to be Vice President and Director of the Measurement Division at The Psychological Corporation.

- Student of criticisms of tests and test use - I joined ETS in 1965 just after an intense period of public criticism of testing. One of the major books from that period was Tyranny of Testing by Banesh Hoffman. The title alone conveys some of the emotional flavor of the attacks. I read all the critical articles and books I could find and began a collection that now numbers several hundred pieces of such literature.

- Prefer to look for mutually agreeable solutions - my own style of dealing with critics of my work is to seek mutually agreeable solutions, what my boss, Thomas A. Williamson, President of Psych Corp, likes to refer to as "Win-Win" outcomes. This means looking for what each side wants, building understanding and respect for each other, and starting with areas of agreement and helping these areas grow larger. I like a counselling or negotiating approach as opposed to a confrontational one.

- Dislike intensely legal model for resolving professional issues - I have a very negative view of the legal model for solving problems. It is an adversarial model that focuses on differences. The goal is to win for your side and the selective presentation of evidence is a critical part of winning. During my time at ETS I received quite a bit of coaching on how to avoid being tricked by other lawyers. One defense is to give as little information as possible.

- Proponent of greater professional association role in quality assurance in testing - my presentation reviews the kinds of activities professional associations can and do engage in to promote quality test development and use. I urge a greater role for NCME as well as APA and AERA both because I think it is our responsibility and because I think we can do the job much better with our academic and research models than the lawyers will do with their adversarial models.

B. Setting Professional Standards for Test Development and Use

- Establishing basic standards
- Using development process to explore many issues
- Finding areas of professional agreement
- Obtaining broad endorsement of standards
- Publicizing standards in an understandable form
- Keeping standards current
- Providing interpretation when needed

Establishing basic standards - One of the contributions professional associations can and do make to quality testing is that of setting standards. This is a time of celebration for us in testing because we have a new and very finely crafted set of standards for both test development and use.

Using development process to explore many issues - The standards were adopted after a long process of drafting, deliberation, and review that required top measurement professionals to address many important issues of testing policy and practice. The many groups involved and even the controversies over areas of the standards have made it likely that a large group of measurement professionals will give careful and continuing attention to the standards when they plan and carry out testing projects.

Finding areas of professional agreement - The process of developing standards has also helped clarify areas of agreement and disagreement within different parts of the measurement profession. It doesn't make sense to set as a general standard something that a large subset of the field views as irrelevant, questionable, or even absolutely wrong. This same process of having to reach agreement on standards or guidelines occurred within Educational Testing Service when very different testing programs were reviewed against a common set of criteria. As Jerry Murphy's paper pointed out ETS ran pilot studies

applying their guidelines before they became operational, then applied the standards internally for two to three years before inviting a visiting committee to perform an external audit. This practice of "pretesting" the standards worked very well and is worth imitating. The review process for the joint standards played this same pretesting role.

- Obtaining broad endorsement of standards - The practice of obtaining broad endorsement of our professional standards substantially increases their value as action documents. The Psychological Corporation and the other commercial test publishing companies have endorsed the standards as have ETS and ACT and a number of other agencies. At The Psychological Corporation, part of the explicit responsibility of each measurement professional is to know and be guided by the specific standards that bear directly on their work and to have a general familiarity with the entire document.

- Publicizing standards in an understandable form - One of the major tasks that I see ahead for NCME is that of publicizing the standards for the large group of non-technically trained people who play a major role in testing. The standards document is large and complex enough that it will be quite forbidding to someone not trained in testing. We need brief summary statements highlighting the most important issues that are likely to face test users. We also need ways of reaching people in roles such as school system superintendencies that require them to make important decisions about tests.

- Keeping standards current and Providing interpretation when needed - We also need some way to keep our standards current. Perhaps those individuals from the drafting committee who have given so much to complete the job of developing the standards need a recovery period. However, we need to establish an ongoing group that can interpret the standards, issue supplementary advisory statements, and, in general, help us conduct our measurement work in a manner consistent with the standards.

C. Publications/Informational Activities

- For professionals within the associations
- For others who actually use tests and test-based data
- For other interested parties

- For professionals within the associations - One of the ways of making sure that our standards have as significant an effect as possible is to use a publications program to make people aware of the standards and how they can be applied. We say in the introduction to the November 1, 1984 version -

> "The purpose of publishing the standards is to provide criteria for the evaluation of tests, testing practices, and the effects of test use."

But what exactly do we expect different groups of people to do with the standards? I know that my test development and statistical staff have to follow development procedures called for in the standards. We have to produce test manuals and other related documents so that the quality of our work can be evaluated.

- For others who actually use the test and test-based data and For other interested parties - But what about the many other people who play a part in testing? What about the people who serve on test selection committees for states and school districts? We certainly cannot expect the teachers and curriculum specialists on these committees to read the entire standards. However, there is much valuable and easy to understand information in the following chapters:
    - 3 Test Development and Revision
    - 5 Test Publications
    - 6 General Principles of Test Use
    - 8 Educational Testing and Psychological Testing in the schools.

Why not have a series of small publications or handouts, with highlights of these chapters, for use in test selection settings?

One of our very active NCME people, Ron Hambleton, is involved in a series of efforts to help with the publications/information effort.

- In his role as editor of Journal of Educational Measurement, Ron has commissioned a series of seven brief overviews of how the standards could be used and barriers to using them. The overviews will be provided by:
  - State department of education staff
  - School district staff
  - Test publishers

  APA Division #5 Public Affairs Committee - Under Ron's chairmanship this group has considered several possible activities including the development of:
  - Brief guide to using standards
  - Series of workshops

D. Training Activities

- Initial professional training
- Continuing education for people in field
- Training for those not in field who play major roles, e.g., school administrators and legislators
- National and local meetings

- Initial professional training - The idea of a series of workshops takes me to another topic - that of training. One goal we should set for our professional associations is that of getting useful material about the standards into the hands of those who train the people we hope to be influencing. This is not so much an issue for those coming out of professional measurement programs - there are so few such people, each of us in this room could simply go tell one person and the job would be done. The real job is that of reaching the people in other professional areas.

- Continuing education for people in field - Our professional associations do a good job helping us keep up with new developments. The journal publication program and the use of presessions at annual meetings are two effective ways of communicating new knowledge and ideas to practicing measurement professionals. Both these mechanisms can be employed to increase familiarity with the substance of the standards and to provide help in the application of the standards in different contexts. It might be useful, for example, to have articles and workshops dealing with the use of standards in personnel selection, classification testing in special education, high school graduation/grade promotion testing, teacher certification testing, and similar critical and highly visible areas of test use.

- Training for those not in field who play major roles, e.g., school administrators and legislators - In order for the standards to substantially improve testing practice we are going to have to reach the large group of school administrators, personnel directors, legislators, teachers, curriculum specialists, school psychologists, and others involved in testing. In some cases we will be able to work through the state departments of education, school districts, and state professional associations. The professional associations concerned with measurement must review what is possible and desirable and then what we can afford. Perhaps a self-sustaining effort could be developed if we can really meet a need. A workshop entitled "How to build a legally defensible testing program" or "20 Steps to staying out of court" would very likely be well attended.

- National and local meetings - Each scheduled national, state, or local professional meeting over the next two to three years should be considered as an opportunity to build working knowledge of the standards and how to apply them to practice. We need not fear redundancy, only the failure to reach the people with practical, constructive advice and enouragement. Only such an orchestrated effort will be sufficient to realize the potential of the standards to upgrade practice.

E. Monitoring Compliance With Standards

- Self-Policing - Judging professionals within field, censure or expulsion as ultimate weapon
- Tribunal Role - Use of hearings on specific instances or general issues.
- Consultation/Arbitration - Professional association as source of neutral but knowledgeable third parties.
- Complaint Inventory/Reporting - Professional association as official collecting point for concerns - Periodic reports on the nature of concerns.
- Facilitator - Professional associations as neutral organizer of groups, e.g., possible new consortium including test publishers representation.
- "Not My Table" Model - Not accepting any responsibility for encouraging compliance.

The area of professional association monitoring of compliance with the standards seems to make very nervous the people I have talked to who are active in AERA and NCME. I hear concerns about expense, time, legal involvements, divisiveness with the field, and the like. I feel, though, that leaving compliance to independent individuals and agencies and to the legal profession really dodges a responsibility. I want to talk, therefore, about a set of professional roles that all seem to me to offer some benefits.

- Self-policing - first, self-policing of association members, this is something that APA has done. To do this you need a code of ethics of some kind and a method of hearing criticism and charges. AERA and NCME are quite different organizations than APA yet AERA and NCME members also make test-related decisions that have significant impacts on the lives of people. The self policing model, partly based on the standards should be considered for both AERA and NCME members.

Tribunal Rule - Establishment of special group to hold hearings on special technical problems associated with such critical arenas of testing as the following:

- Teacher Testing
  - merit pay for high test performance
  - standards for in service teacher testing
- Selecting excellent schools
- Choosing students for gifted and talented programs
- Building national indicators
- Evaluating computer-based test products (There is an APA/AERA/NCME semi-formal collaboration on this issue now)

Consultation-Arbitration - Provide core of experts as sources of knowledge/experience. Could range from informal referrals based on self-nominations or reputation, this already occurs now, to the development of a formal group that met certain standards and agreed to follow particular guidelines. Perhaps some variation of the ETS audit system could be managed by NCME and AERA. People with disputes on technical issues who had not yet gotten to the stage of wanting to sue each other could submit "cases" for review and judgment. This would amount to a "voluntary audit." The result would be a professional review and an opinion by people very familiar with the standards and the technical issues involved but without a personal stake in the dispute.

If such a model were followed I would urge that both parties be required not to use the results of the audit in any future legal case.

- Complaint Inventory/Reporting - I have heard APA staff talk about occasionally receiving complaints about the use of psychological tests. I assume that there are complaints voiced to the NCME and AERA leadership group also. Perhaps we should set up a formal mechanism for encouraging people with concerns about testing to record their discontent. The problems could then be referred to the agencies who might help and records could be maintained about the complaints. Annual reporting could be done at our professional meetings on the topics/issues most frequently raised. Follow-up checks could be made to see if the concerned party was satisfied with his or her treatment.

- Facilitator - Our professional organizations can also help improve the quality of tests and test uses by bringing other institutions together to pool ideas and talent. The APA is trying this now with the test publishers group that Bob Linn mentioned. One aspect of this effort is an attempt to develop a testing industry code of Fair Testing -- an idea of Gregory Anrig, current President of ETS. Another project is that of developing a set of qualifications for test purchasers.

- The professional association role is very important in working with test publishers as those of us who work for publishers want to be sure that we observe all the laws about relationships among competing organizations.

- Our professional associations concerned with testing also can help by bringing other agencies and associations into activities where we could work together:

- Teachers Groups, e.g. NEA & AFT
- School Administrators
  - AASA
  - NASSP
  - NAESP
- School Psychologists
- Special Educators
- Personnel Directors

F. CLOSING

I have sketched out a number of ways that I think that the NCME, AERA, and APA could expand their roles in quality assurance in test development and use. Some of my suggestions build on existing activities and expand them a bit. Others require a larger professional association commitment of people, time, and money. I believe that now is the time to make the commitment and to figure out how to get the money that is needed. We are experiencing a dramatic increase in test use and an expansion of the group whose lives are being affected by testing. We must protect our reputations and our professional futures by maintaining and enhancing quality.

Lets not follow my last model - the "Not My Table" one. The label comes from my colleague at The Psychological Corporation, Barrie Wellens, who uses it to describe complete denial of responsibility. In some NYC restaurants, the waiters are so limited to their own section that even if you ask them the time of day - they say

"That's not my table"

Quality in testing on the other hand, is the responsibility of all of us.

JF:dd
2121K